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## The IGU Knowledge Centre

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## The IGU Knowledge Centre

By Bert Huizing

The quantity of information readily available to businesses, government, managers and professionals in today's Information Society is unprecedented, but its quality is a different matter.

Sorting the data for accuracy and relevance can be a frustrating and at times overwhelming process, and IGU and its members are no strangers to information overload.

The IGU Coordination Committee considers that part of its mission is to support members in their search for information, and thereby generate added value for IGU. This article describes briefly how the IGU Knowledge Centre supports the members of IGU by providing relevant and high-quality information.

### ● Information Society

The Information Society is a new kind of society, a society in which economic life is critically dependent on information and communication technologies.



The Information Society is a new kind of society.

In his book *Information Anxiety*<sup>1</sup>, Richard Wurman claimed that the weekday edition of *The New York Times* contains more information than the average person in 17th-century England was likely to come across in a lifetime. This personalises the oft-cited estimate that more information has been produced in the last 30 years than in the previous 5000. Statistics like these highlight the phenomenon of an information explosion and its consequence: information overload.

The development of this new society has been accompanied by an increase in the information needed to keep up with constant change. This leads to psychological, physical and social problems. A worldwide survey by Reuters found that two-thirds of managers suffer from increased tension and one-third from ill health because of information overload. Other effects of too much information include anxiety, difficulties in memorising and remembering, poor decision-making and reduced attention span.

### ● IGU and information

One of the most important objectives of IGU is to increase the value to its members as a forum for the structured enhancement and exchange of information and knowledge. Over the years IGU's Working Committees and Task Forces have produced valuable information and knowledge for the gas industry as a whole. To continue this important task, improvements must be made since some preconditions are changing. One example is the liberalisation of the European gas market.

To improve Committee performance and to deal with the information problems that IGU Committee members face, the Coordination Committee, as stated in the Triennial Work Programme 2003-2006, aims to implement information management to streamline and improve the process of obtaining relevant information. For the realisation of this objective, the

1. R. S. Wurman, *Information Anxiety*, New York: Doubleday, 1989.



Coordination Committee asked Gasunie Engineering & Technology for advice, since they have relevant expertise and experience in information and knowledge management.

As a result the Coordination Committee and Gasunie Engineering & Technology have established the experimental IGU Knowledge Centre (IKC) in Groningen, The Netherlands, which started operations in January. After the World Gas Conference in June 2006 IGU will evaluate the added value of the IKC service. Decisions about if and how this service should continue will be taken in the next Triennium.

#### ● IGU Knowledge Centre

The IGU Knowledge Centre supplies all interested IGU members with information and knowledge. It provides basic information free of charge and

will issue a quotation for more elaborate questions.

Services include literature searches, delivery of facts and figures related to market research, business intelligence and strategic studies. Furthermore, the Centre is able to give advice on various aspects of information and knowledge management.

For more information and inquiries you can contact the IGU Knowledge Centre by e-mail: [IKC@wgc2006.nl](mailto:IKC@wgc2006.nl).

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The IGU Knowledge Centre is hosted by Gasunie Engineering & Technology in Groningen.

